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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Introduction aux Études Historiques. Par CH.-V. LANGLOIS, Chargé de cours à la Sorbonne, et CH. SEIGNOBOS, Maitre de conférences à la Sorbonne. (Paris: Hachette et Cie. 1898. Pp. xviii, 308.)

STUDENTS of history, the authors of this volume argue in their preface, stand in need, in a greater degree than students of any other subject, of a clear understanding of the methods that they are called to employ. "In history the instinctive methods of procedure are not the rational methods," while "the rational processes of attaining historical knowledge differ so widely from those of all other sciences that it is necessary to perceive their exceptional character" in order to avoid adopting in history methods that have their only proper application in other fields. The outline of historical method which the authors have here sketched on the basis of their lectures at the Sorbonne aims to give something more definite and substantial than is to be found in works of the type of Droysen's *Historik* and Freeman's *Methods of Historical Study*, without attempting the elaborateness of Bernheim's *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*. The first half of the book is due to M. Langlois, the second is the work of M. Seignobos.

The first part considers, as belonging to the preliminary equipment of the historian, the conditions of the transmission and collection of historical material and the means of finding it (*Heuristique*), and the various "auxiliary sciences"—philology, palaeography, diplomatics, etc.—whose usefulness depends upon the special period and subject to be studied. Book II. then takes up the operations of analysis necessary to disengage the historical fact from the "document" in which it is contained. History is not a science of observation; the historian does not observe directly the facts with which he deals, they are known to him only indirectly by the traces which they have left, either in material remains or in psychical effects which can be expressed only by means of symbols. From these symbolic representations—which, written, spoken, or pictured, constitute the great mass of historical sources—the actual occurrence can be reached only by reconstructing, in inverse order, the entire chain of operations intervening between the original observation and the symbol as we now have it. The historian must begin by assuring himself that the "document" has reached him in its original form, or in case he has to deal with a copy, by restoring the original to the extent that existing means permit; he has then to determine its time, place, and authorship, and frequently the sources from which it has been composed;

and the various related "documents" must be collected and classified. These various processes of external criticism completed, the more difficult work of internal criticism begins. For the history of men's ideas, beliefs, and state of knowledge in general, where the conception which the writer had in his mind is all that is sought, but one further step is necessary, namely the interpretation of the text, made with the fullest possible knowledge of its context and of the language in which it is written. To arrive at actual events, however, the historian must proceed to test the good faith and accuracy of the author, each of whose statements should be approached with systematic distrust at every point. The only certain results of this process of criticism are the negative results; on the positive side it can do no more than indicate the degrees of probability attaching to different individual affirmations, which cannot become scientifically established facts until verified by the concordant testimony of other "documents" representing different observations. Even then the results of historical investigation, indirect at best, cannot attain the certitude reached by the sciences of direct observation, and in case of disagreement the historian must yield to the natural scientist.

The synthetic operations necessary to construct history out of the heterogeneous materials furnished by these processes of analysis form the subject of Book III. This side of methodology has not yet received sufficient attention—for the classification of the incoherent mass of historical facts "the practice of historians furnishes no method; originating as a branch of literature, history has remained the least methodic of the sciences." History cannot imitate biology; its materials come indirectly through the medium of the imagination, imagined but not imaginary, and are described in terms that are often inexact and misleading. The problem of the historian is to re-imagine the event from the description and classify the events thus imagined under appropriate categories by means of a series of questions; the gaps that remain in each group are next to be filled where possible by inference from facts already established, and he may then proceed to construct general conclusions from the material thus arranged and enlarged and to express the results in monographs or more extended works.

In their brief conclusion the authors speak of the limitations of history and the need of a division of labor among historians and summarize their views concerning the advantages of historical study. Rejecting the old view of history as a *magistra vitae* furnishing rules for the conduct of life, they claim for it an indirect utility only. It helps us to understand the present by explaining its origins, although for this purpose the history of our own century is in most cases sufficient; it is also indispensable to the progress of the political and social sciences, which, by reason of the insufficiency of the data afforded by existing phenomena, must draw their materials in great measure from the past and in so doing must (often as they are tempted to forget it) adopt the methods of historical research. The chief justification of historical study is, however, to be found in its effects upon the mind, in inculcating a wholesome scepticism, in familiar-

izing men with different customs and with the idea of social change, and in explaining the nature of historical evolution, so different from the evolution of the animal world. The volume closes with two appendices dealing with the condition of historical studies in French institutions of secondary and higher education.

This summary will serve to show the general plan of the book, although it does not do justice to its originality of thought or its clearness of exposition. The *Introduction* is simpler and more compact than Bernheim's *Lehrbuch*, whose merits the authors acknowledge and to which they frequently refer; it omits the bibliographies, the discussions of metaphysical problems, and the numerous examples which occupy so much space in that excellent manual. On the other hand it supplements Bernheim at several important points, its analysis is often more penetrating, and it devotes a larger share of its attention to the important problems of historical synthesis. Some of the authors' statements demand fuller justification than has here been given, and some of them are sufficiently radical to provoke dissent in many quarters, but the work as a whole is a valuable contribution to the literature of historical method and cannot be read without stimulating thought and clarifying one's ideas. It is to be hoped that the demand for the *Introduction* will be sufficient to encourage M. Seignobos to prepare the elaborate treatise on historical method which he has in contemplation. He has worked out certain phases of the subject more fully in his noteworthy articles, *Les Conditions Psychologiques de la Connaissance en Histoire*, in the *Revue Philosophique*, July and August, 1887.

CHARLES H. HASKINS.

A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age. By ARTHUR CUSHMAN MCGIFFERT, PH.D., D.D., Professor of Church History in the Union Theological Seminary, New York. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1897. Pp. xiii, 681.)

THIS is the most comprehensive and the most critical work upon the Apostolic Age that has yet proceeded from the American press and an American author, and it is destined to play an important part for some time to come in the discussion of the questions connected with the rise and early history of Christianity. That it will be accepted as a standard history by American scholars and the reading public is hardly to be expected, or desired. The work may be briefly characterized as an attempt to reconstruct the history of the origin and development of Christianity in the Apostolic Age upon the lines laid down by Professor Harnack and the "modified" Ritschl school. Still there are many important things in the book to which, if we are not mistaken, Dr. Harnack will hesitate to subscribe. This is only to say, that Professor McGiffert, while agreeing in the main with Harnack, does not hesitate to diverge from him, and gives abundant evidence of independent research and critical acumen.

In the arrangement of his material Professor McGiffert has adopted